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FM AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4551

INFO RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING PRIORITY 5280

RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO PRIORITY 5547

RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA PRIORITY 0724

RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD PRIORITY 3556

RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 4906

RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 0842

RUEHCI/AMCONSUL CALCUTTA PRIORITY 3031

RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY 1468

RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY

RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 2346

RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC PRIORITY

RHMFISS/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI PRIORITY

RUEAAIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY

RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KATHMANDU 000123

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/19/2017

TAGS: PGOV PTER PREL PREF NP

SUBJECT: NEPAL: HOME MINISTER SAYS POLICE TO BE DEPLOYED
SOON

Classified By: Ambassador James F. Moriarty. Reasons 1.4 (b/d).

Summary

¶1. (C) On January 19, Home Minister Krishna Prasad Sitaula told the Ambassador that the Government of Nepal (GON) planned to re-instate all police posts across the country within one week. Sitaula added that the GON also planned a significant presence of the Armed Police Force in every voting constituency to provide security for the Constituent Assembly elections. The Ambassador replied that the U.S. had some resources to support the Nepal Police. The Ambassador asked Sitaula for assurance that the GON would continue to provide protection for American citizens in Nepal, and Umesh Prasad Mainali, the Home Secretary, assured the Ambassador that it would. The Ambassador also thanked the Home Minister for his support of the ongoing census of Bhutanese refugees, and pushed for the GON to allow resettlement to the U.S. Sitaula said that a decision on establishment of local government would be made by the Interim Cabinet.

Police Presence to Increase

¶2. (C) In a January 19 meeting with the Ambassador, Home Minister Krishna Prasad Sitaula said that the GON was planning to finish reinstating police posts within one week. Sitaula further revealed that the GON was going to create posts in all 205 voting constituencies in the country for the Armed Police Force (APF) to provide security for the planned Constituent Assembly elections in June. In the Terai (southern Nepal on the border with India), these new posts would have between 50 and 75 officers each, while in the hill areas there would be between 35 and 50 officers. Sitaula stated that these new posts would be established within one month. Sitaula said that the security forces (both the Nepal Police and the APF) would begin to confront any Maoists who broke the law after arms management was complete. Umesh Prasad Mainali, the Home Secretary, said that once arms management was complete, it would be the role of the police to enforce security on all sides.

Resources to Support the Police

¶13. (C) The Ambassador told Sitaula that the U.S. would have some money to support the police so they could provide security for the elections. The Ambassador said that this money could be used toward training and logistical support, among other things, and that the Embassy would be in touch with the Home Ministry soon to plan the details. Sitaula stated that the biggest need for the Nepal Police was equipment; most of the re-instated police posts lacked communication equipment, food, and basic needs for the officers. Sitaula acknowledged that India would provide some of this, but what India would provide would not be enough to fulfill the needs of the Nepal Police. Sitaula believed that training would be difficult in the short term, but was willing to look at possibilities.

GON Will Protect Americans

¶14. (C) The Ambassador expressed concern to Sitaula over recent threats against Americans from the Maoists. The Ambassador further stressed that the Embassy had received reports of the Maoists attempting to infiltrate or incite to violence the Diversity Visa protestors outside the Embassy. The Ambassador asked for assurance from the GON that the Nepal Police would protect Americans and the Embassy against any wrongdoing. Secretary Mainali stated that he would instruct the Inspector General of Police on this matter immediately. (Note: The Ambassador raised this same issue with Prime Minister Koirala on January 17 and received a similar reply. End note.)

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Next Steps on Bhutanese Refugees

¶15. (C) The Ambassador thanked the Home Minister for his ministry's support for the census of the Bhutanese refugees in eastern Nepal. The Ambassador asked Sitaula to back the U.S.-planned resettlement of up to 60,000 Bhutanese refugees from the camps. Reticent at first, Sitaula eventually acknowledged that the only two realistic options for the refugees were either to remain indefinitely in camps in Nepal or to be resettled in a third country, since Bhutan had shown no willingness to repatriate any of the refugees. Sitaula stressed that India was part of the problem, because India was unwilling to pressure Bhutan to permit any of the refugees to return.

Local Government to be Decided by Interim Cabinet

¶16. (C) Sitaula told the Ambassador that the Cabinet was currently considering the re-establishment of local government. He said that all of the parties in the Seven-Party Alliance as well as the Maoists should have representation at the local level. However, Sitaula stressed that the political parties also needed to expand their own political activities in the countryside in order to provide an atmosphere for free and fair elections.

Comment

¶17. (C) It is a positive development that the GON has a plan for establishing APF posts in each voting constituency. If there is a sufficient police presence, with orders to confront any violations of the law, Maoist or non-Maoist, then the fear will begin to drain from the countryside and the chances of a free and fair election will increase. Whether these "ifs" will be fulfilled remains to be seen. Re-establishment of local government structures -- presumably some variation of the existing Village Development Committees -- will also be crucial to make Nepal's villagers more secure

in the lead-up to the proposed June elections. As Sitaula made clear, however, the parties themselves have yet to decide on the details of local governance, let alone reach agreement with the Maoists.

MORIARTY